

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: FWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime (406-461-0587)

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, August 7 – August 13, 2010

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2009 annual report) can be found on the FWP website.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

FWP's northwest field team is working on replacing a radio collar in the Pulpit Mountain pack.

On 8/10, Laudon et al. caught and radio collared two adult wolves in the Cabinet pack south of Troy.

Flights: Lance flew north of Butte / Helena on 8/10.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On 8/8, WS confirmed a calf was injured by wolves and later died due to injuries in the Ruby (south and west of Ennis) in the Horse Creek pack territory. The attack had occurred prior to the removal of 2 wolves by WS as authorized by FWP. One wolf was killed on 7/29 and the other on 8/6. On 8/12, WS confirmed another calf as being killed by wolves in the same general area as 7/29. Lethal control efforts to date have not stopped the depredations. Because of chronic livestock losses on both public and private lands in a short period of time (5-6 confirmed incidents from 7/23-8/12 affecting 4 different owners), FWP has authorized removal of the rest of the pack.

Outreach and Education

See below for an update on Judge Molloy's ruling which reinstated Endangered Species Act Protections for the wolf throughout the northern Rocky Mountains.

FWP staff updated the wolf pages on the FWP website to reflect the relisting and have been very busy fielding calls from the media and the public. FWP appreciates everyone's efforts and help in getting information about this important change distributed more broadly.

See <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf> for the latest information regarding what the ruling means for Montana, what changes and what doesn't. FWP's most recent media releases are also available.

Research Activities

Nothing to report.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

Nothing to report.

Other Updates

Northern Rockies Delisting Litigation in Missoula Federal Court

On 8/6, federal Endangered Species Act protections were reinstated through a ruling from the federal court. The court ruled that the federal Endangered Species Act does not allow the federal government to subdivide a distinct population segment so that a species is listed in part of it and delisted in the other part. The ruling stated that the wolf must either be listed or delisted as one unit within the Northern Rockies region. Further, given that the current Wyoming wolf management plan and regulatory mechanisms are not approved by the federal government and are considered inadequate, federal protections must be reinstated throughout the region.

Wolves across northern Montana are now legally reclassified as federally endangered. Wolves across southern Montana are reclassified as experimental, non-essential. Different federal regulations apply to each area. See <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf> for information about the federal regulations and other updates.

FWP will retain the authority to manage wolves according to the federal regulations while federal and state efforts to delist wolves resume. An interagency cooperative agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) grants authority to FWP to implement as much of Montana's plan as allowed by federal regulations. FWP will continue to be the lead agency for wolf monitoring, addressing wolf-livestock conflicts, public outreach, and research. Federal funding to support FWP's work will continue for another year. Montana's Indian Tribes will continue to lead wolf conservation and management efforts on their respective reservations. USDA Wildlife Services will continue to investigate injured and dead livestock suspected to be wolf related and assist with both non-lethal and lethal control efforts. The Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program will continue to process claims for confirmed and probable livestock death losses due to wolves.

The FWP Commission strongly urged FWP to consider an appeal to the 9th Circuit Court as soon as possible and to aggressively seek on-the-ground management options with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. As a practical matter, FWP and the FWP Commission continue to believe it is timely and appropriate to conserve and manage wolves as resident wildlife under full state authority and will work to find avenues to accomplish that goal as soon as possible.

2010 Wolf Hunting Season

Because the federal court ruling reinstated Endangered Species Act protections for wolves throughout the northern Rockies, the 2010 Montana wolf hunting season is canceled. Montana has been exploring options with the USFWS regarding ways to change management on the ground to reflect the wolf population's secure, recovered status and the need to manage the population through hunting. Work to develop options in the event of a relisting had already been underway and will continue.

FWP Employment Opportunity

FWP is in the process of trying to fill a vacant wolf management specialist position in the Livingston area of southwest Montana. Applications must be received by 9-17-10 and include a state application, answers to supplemental questions, and college transcripts. The vacancy announcement and instructions for on how to apply online can be found at the following link:

<https://svc.mt.gov/statejobsearch/listingdetails.aspx?id=3555>

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

The Prevention Subcommittee of the Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Board met on June 4 to begin crafting the Prevention side of the Board's Mission and overall program. Work is ongoing with this effort, a Funding Subcommittee, and a Rules Subcommittee.

The Board's website is www.llrmb.mt.gov. Look under Board and Meetings on the left navigation bar. Agendas and minutes from previous meetings are available at [Montana Department of Livestock](http://MontanaDepartmentofLivestock). The next regularly scheduled meeting of the full Board is expected to be October 18, 2010. The program coordinator can be reached at 444-5609.

Since its first meeting in spring of 2008, the Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Board has prioritized the available funding to pay claims for livestock death losses due to wolves that USDA Wildlife Services investigated and determined to be confirmed or probable. Recently, Program Coordinator Edwards provided the following summary information.

- From April to December 2008, MLLRMB paid a total of \$87,317.68 in claims to 51 different livestock owners for a total of 74 cattle, 149 sheep, 7 goats, 2 guarding dogs, 1 horse, and 4 llamas (i.e. for confirmed and probable death losses).
- For the entire calendar year 2009, MLLRMB paid a total of \$140,755.52 in claims to a total of 58 livestock owners for a total of 104 cattle, 256 sheep, 3 goats, 2 guarding dogs, and 1 horse (i.e. for confirmed and probable death loss).
- Thus far in 2010 (January through July), MLLRMB has paid out \$47,204.83 in claims (compared to \$34,641.10 during the same period in 2009). MLLRMB has reimbursed for the confirmed or probable death loss of 52 cattle, 23 sheep, and 1 horse. Total payments in 2010 through July exceed the amount during the same period in 2009 because of the combination of higher cattle losses compared to the same period in 2009 (even though sheep losses are lower in 2010) and higher overall market prices for both cattle and sheep (value of the animals lost).

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To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP online. Use the following shortcut link and be sure to update your bookmarks: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana at the statewide office: 657-6464. Or, call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock death loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp>. Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 444-5609.